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ECUMENISM IN A NEW MODE

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground... The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry and his countenance fell... Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

(Genesis 4:2 - 5:8)

Why did Cain kill Abel? One reason may be that they had very different life-styles. That is, Abel was a wanderer who took care of sheep while Cain was a farmer.

We receive the impression from this Bible passage that Cain was a murderer and Abel was quiet and sedate. Actually, however, it may very well have been that Abel was a prodigal son and Cain the brother of the prodigal.

As more social systems develop and human life becomes settled, the more social order comes to be emphasized as opposed to the wandering life-style. The Biblical tradition, however, places considerable value on the "sojourner" model. Some scholars have indicated that in the early church there were wandering groups of Christians that existed alongside the established churches. Organized churches supported these groups of wanderers and maintained mutual relationships with them.

The church gradually moved in the direction of greater institutionalization and the inevitable result of this was the establishment of institutions, structures and systems which hardened enough to become forms of oppression built to maintain order, durability, status and privilege.

The voices in the wilderness of prophets

and others, and the cries of the suffering masses of the people were heard and recorded according to institutionalized church formulae. These problems were presented for discussion in various select church committee meetings. After deliberating on them, the committees will decide that the church should commission committee work relative to the issue at hand. After long months and years, a beautiful report will be published, and with its completion, the church will rest assured that it had discharged its responsibility.

The ecumenical movement aims at realizing cooperation and unity between various church institutions. We must also recognize and foster another type of cooperation that should exist between the institutionalized church and the movements of the sojourners, the movements of the faithful. Reformation of the church and other creative renewal efforts were guided by the prophetic witnesses of these movements. By them, it was hoped that the institutional church might once again have life and have it in abundance. But at the same time, these movements created fear and apprehension within the institutional church and its related committees.

All over the world at this time, movements of sojourners which are outside the framework of the institutional church are on the increase. It is a time in which the Church must learn from these movements. The task of the National Christian Council in Japan is to follow a path of justice and love as revealed by God. It must sustain mutual relations with the sojourner movements. This may be a very difficult road to follow. Yet even though the determination to follow such a path may

undermine the very basis of the NCC-J's organizational structure, we must have the courage to continue along this path through the help of the Holy Spirit.

The above statement was delivered to the opening worship service of the NCC-J Central Committee meeting on Sept. 12, 1985 by the Rev. TAKEDA Makoto, vice-chairperson of the NCC-J and Principal of the Central Theological College of the Seikokai (Anglican Church).

KOREAN PRIEST

GUEST AT THURSDAY SERVICE

On October 3, 1985 Rev. MOON Chon Hyun from south Korea was welcomed at the Japan Christian Centre as speaker at the weekly Thursday prayer service.

Rev. Moon, arrested in March 1976 when he signed the "Declaration for Democratic National Salvation", has since that time worked among farmers and labourers.

During the service, he spoke of the control exercised by the President of Korea. This control is reflected in legislation such as that prohibiting unity among urban industrial workers.

Farmers are burdened with increasingly heavy debts under the government's present agricultural policies. In the past, owning cattle was a traditional symbol of wealth. Today, under government pressure to buy cattle, cows have become a symbol of debt. Farmers face strict competition from the more than 360 agricultural products imported, which increases their burden.

Rev. Moon declared that the problems of the farmers and students are survival issues and thus the Church must share their problems. The present situation of the people must be the context for studying the Gospel. As members of Christ's church, our task is to learn from the ordinary people as they struggle for their rights.

In closing, he suggested that the weekly service should include those who face struggle in their lives, so that others can share in their spirituality, and learn from them.

According to south Korean government figures, the balance of foreign debt owed by that country as of the end of July 1985 was US\$52 billion. That means that 5% of GNP must go towards paying the interest on foreign debt, and another 5% to repay the principal. --ed. note

KIM YOUNG SAM

SPEAKS AT SHINANOMACHI CHURCH

On his way back to Korea from the United States, KIM Young Sam stopped in Tokyo for several days. During that time, he gave a public lecture at the Shinanomachi Church of the Kyodan. Mr. Kim is a key figure in the south Korean political opposition. With KIM Dae Jung, he is co-leader of the Korea New Democratic Party, the main opposition party in south Korea. Over 500 people attended the public meeting, at which Mr. Kim spoke on the theme "The Democratization of south Korea and My Christian Belief."

"Peace is not simply the absence of war. There can be no peace where there is oppression of human rights. There is no unification in the Korean Peninsula and an autocratic government exists which in fact helps to maintain this situation.

"I do not want to see change in the political administration of south Korea by coup d'etat or revolution. Such political change will only delay the democratization of Korea, and may also invite communism. Thus I resist such change.

"I am deeply thankful to God that I have overcome the fear of death. After my protest fast [from May 18 to June 9, 1985], I no longer fear threats on my life. My only concern now is for the people of Korea and the realization of democracy and justice.

"Japan has become a powerful nation in the economic sense, but I would like to see Japan become a strong moral power as well. I would like to see Japan sharing its concern for democratization in Korea."

In responding to questions, Mr. Kim continued by saying that one out of four

ple in south Korea are Christian. However, the fact that there are about 10 million Christians in south Korea is not necessarily something of which he is proud. As the number of Christians increases, the desire for justice gets stronger, yet in reality very few Christians are actually involved in the struggle for justice and human rights.

I believe that to believe in Jesus means trying to become like him. Some of the believers in south Korea, especially members of large churches, are offering prayers in support of the government. I can only say that some have lost the vision of God's love."

In relation to the issue of Japan's national defense budget, Mr. Kim commented that he believes Japan will not follow a course of re-militarization. In fact, he surprised many of his listeners by saying that he felt Japan should increase its military budget in order to maintain the power balance in Asia and the world.

NCCJ JOINS IN CONDEMNING MILITARY ACTION OF PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

The following telex was received by the NCCJ from the EPIC-Philippines News Service. (excerpted)

Peasants of many Luzon provinces who converged on Manila to protest against skyrocketing prices of rice and farm inputs were brutally dispersed by police October 20, 1985 when they attempted to march to the Presidential Palace.

The police opened fire on the demonstrators, killing one student and seriously wounding 19 others. The peasants, participants in a *lakbayan* or "long march", were on their way from the U.S. Embassy to the Palace to deliver their demands to President Marcos. The action marked the first time since the imposition of martial law in 1972 that peasants have organized to mount a unified protest.

Violence erupted when at least 7 anti-riot mobile cars of Manila police tried to run in between the columns of 7000-strong marchers in an attempt to disperse the peaceful demonstration. Wit-

nesses said they saw men in fatigue uniform atop the elevated light railway transit system firing high-powered rifles at the demonstrators. Seven policemen were seen in the streets firing their .38 caliber pistols at the protesters. Truncheons, stones and teargas were used by the police as well.

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines immediately requested appeals of solidarity and statements of protest from their ecumenical partners overseas. The NCCJ's Committee on Philippine Issues responded with a statement of solidarity to the NCCP and the following letter to President Marcos:

Your Excellency,

It gave us deep shock and sorrow that many sugarworkers were massacred by the military on September 20 in Escalante, Negros, and one student killed and many injured during a peaceful peasant demonstration on October 20.

We strongly demand a thorough investigation of these cases. We feel great shock and concern that the military and police mounted such a violent attack on innocent people who are merely demanding their basic human rights.

We, Japanese Christians, are convinced that God's peace, and justice for His people, will never be achieved by military or police force.

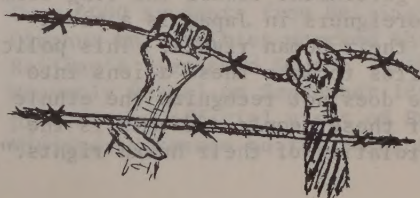
(signed)

NCCJ

Committee on Philippine Concerns



**SOLIDARITY
OF THE CHURCHES
WITH THE FILIPINO PEOPLE'S
DETERMINED PURSUIT FOR
JUSTICE AND FREEDOM**



FINGERPRINTING NEWS

There are presently 12 people who are fighting fingerprinting-related cases in Japanese courts. Four people, Rev. CHOI Chang Wha, Ms. CHOI Son Ae, Mr. HAN Jong Sok and Ms. Kathleen Morikawa, received judgements at district courts. The first three mentioned above have now taken their cases to higher courts.

Judgements in all four of the cases have been similar. The defendants have argued that Article 14 of the Japanese Constitution guarantees that all people should be treated equally under Japanese law. Since the only Japanese who are fingerprinted are those who have been indicted for a criminal offense, to require aliens to be fingerprinted, especially the Koreans in Japan most of whom have been born and raised here, is a violation of their human rights as guaranteed in the Japanese Constitution and the International Covenant on Human Rights which Japan ratified in 1979.

District court judges have stated that while all people have the freedom to refuse to be forcibly fingerprinted, the fingerprinting system is not unconstitutional. In other words, while the law may be unjust, it does not go against the Constitution as presently constituted. As a change in the Constitution is the responsibility of the Diet, court judgements did not give serious consideration to, or examination of constitutional change.

Ronald Fujiyoshi's Case

Ronald Fujiyoshi, an American United Church of Christ missionary, working among Korean residents in Osaka, is in the process of having his case heard in Kobe District Court. He writes,

"My case is a little different [from other fingerprinting cases now in court] in that I am arguing that the policy of "Assimilation and Control" of the Japanese government toward the long-term Asian foreigners in Japan is a violation of their human rights. This policy which tries to make these aliens into Japanese does not recognize the ethnic pride of these people and this is the major violation of their human rights."

Vital to his defense is the testimony 15 witnesses presented to the court, among whom are

"experts who would clarify what this 'Assimilation and Control Policy' is, and why it is a violation of the right of long-term Asian foreigners. Although four witnesses were approved, the main witnesses to testify on this 'Assimilation and Control Policy' have not been recognized. Without the content of the policy being adequately presented in court, we do not feel that we have been given a fair hearing."

At the most recent hearing on September 24th, the District Court judge reiterated his stand that no further witnesses would be recognized. Observers feel that the Court seems anxious to finish with the case as soon as possible.

Further refusals

By the end of September, the pro-Seoul Korean Residents in Japan Union (Mindan) reported that close to 12,000 foreign nationals had refused to be fingerprinted when applying for, or renewing their Alien Registration.

KIM Myong Shik, a Korean (from Korea) doing graduate study in Japan, and Edwin Kang, an American missionary from the Presbyterian Church working among Koreans in Japan, refused to fingerprint on September 28th and October 1st respectively. The following are excerpts of the statements they wrote explaining their action.

"...The movement of Koreans in Japan to refuse fingerprinting is a people's movement to regain their human rights. It is a movement for people's self-determination to restore international equality, and a movement to restore peaceful co-existence and international peace..."

As a member of the Korean people, the pain of Koreans in Japan is my own pain. The deprivation of their right to live is my own deprivation, and their victimization is not only my own victimization but that of all citizens of the world. I support wholeheartedly the movement to refuse fingerprinting. At

the same time, I reject the fingerprinting system and along with many others, through democratic means, I look for a just solution."

--Kim Myong Shik

I am a Korean-American missionary working with the Korean Christian Church in Japan in caring for the Koreans in Japan, on behalf of 3.5 million Christians in the Presbyterian Church (USA). I have a greater reason to refuse fingerprinting than that of a violation of my privacy and personal human rights. It is to stop the oppressive policy against Koreans in Japan and other powerless minorities and thus to build a true democratic society in Japan and peace in Asia and the whole world. It is the love, will and message of God to stop oppression and discrimination in Japan and to liberate the Koreans and others from a life of suffering, and to liberate Japanese people from their evil spirit of prejudice and discrimination. To this end, we may build a peaceful society in Japan, which truly honours the weak, powerless, and poor so that people may truly enjoy each other with trust and love without any discrimination..."

--Edwin Kang

YASUKUNI SHRINE VISIT DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

The following article appeared in the Kirisuto Shimbun Christ Weekly on October 19. The writer is a Christian lawyer, IMAMURA Tsuguo.

On August 15th this year, the Prime Minister of Japan and 18 Cabinet members paid an official governmental visit to the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine where war criminals are among those enshrined as war heroes. Those who are opposing such visitations by government officials are to be reminded that this action is nothing less than indication that the past mistakes of Japan are forgotten. It is the beginning of another crisis, for such an act committed by the government is against the Constitution. We must then work to strengthen our efforts to oppose the anti-nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine.

The report of the governmental committee on the Yasukuni Shrine indicates that public visitation to the Shrine by governmental officials is for the purpose of mourning the war dead. It explains that paying respect to the dead is a natural human act and a universal custom that goes beyond race, state, and religious differences. The report stresses that it is the responsibility of the State to commemorate those fallen in war. Given this understanding, the concept of mourning the war dead does not include any aspect of mourning other Asian war victims.

On July 28, 1981, a small committee of the ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, stated "August 15th is a day of mourning for those fallen in war; on that day the State and all Japanese people should become one in mourning the war dead and in desiring an assurance of peace in this country which will not be threatened again by others."

This statement implies that wars before World War II threatened Japan's security. Wars are seen as an inevitable result of the aggression of threatening foreign powers. Therefore, in the minds of government officials, there is no doubt that war criminals are war heroes and should be praised as war martyrs. Making the mourning ceremony an official State-level one has the effect of strengthening state power to control people's minds. When a public organization recognizes the war dead as "heroes" and the Prime Minister adopts this attitude, it encourages the sentiment that it is honourable to die for the sake of the country.

The separation of the State and religion in the Constitution is to prohibit any governmental attempt to control the minds of the Japanese people through the nationalization of Shintoism.

CHINESE STUDENTS PROTEST SHRINE VISIT

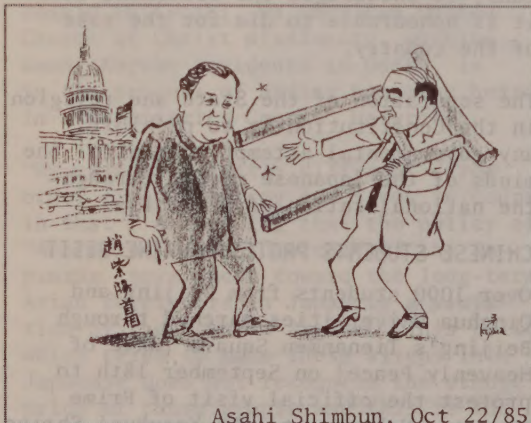
Over 1000 students from Beijing and Qinghua Universities marched through Beijing's Tiananmen Square [Gate of Heavenly Peace] on September 18th to protest the official visit of Prime Minister Nakasone to the Yasukuni Shrine

on August 15th. That day marked the 54th anniversary of the Japanese bombing attack that led to Japan's invasion of China.

Why the students were allowed to stage such a rally was a matter of some interest and speculation. There is little doubt, however, that though the demonstration was strictly contained to the Square, the Chinese government at the very least, "understood" the feelings of the students.

While Chinese government officials protested to Japan at the time of the visit, stating it was "offensive to many Japanese Chinese and other Asian peoples", they appeared unwilling to pressure Japan on the issue. Nevertheless, the surprisingly vehement student protest seemed to have some impact on Japanese leaders. Prime Minister Nakasone called off a previously planned visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on the occasion of its annual autumn festival. (Since he became Prime Minister 3 years ago, Nakasone has visited the Shrine "as a private citizen" during both its spring and autumn festivals.)

The illustration below demonstrates that though both the Chinese and Japanese governments (represented here by Chinese Premier ZIAO Zi-yang and Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone) wish to better their bilateral relations, the Yasukuni Issue (represented by the grand *torii* [gate] of the Shrine) is getting in the way.



Asahi Shimbun, Oct 22/85

SEMINAR ON THE ISE GRAND SHRINE

YAMASHITA AKiko

Researcher - NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions

A Seminar on the Ise Grand Shrine with theme centering in on Folk Religiosity Shinto, was held for the foreign community in Japan from October 15 to 17 at I City, with the participation of 41 missionaries including those sent from the Catholic Church.

The program was planned around two lectures, one on "The Rituals of Ise Shrine" delivered by OGAKI Toyotaka, General Secretary for Priest Training at the shrine; and the other on the "History of Ise Shrine," delivered by Prof. Kamata Junichi of Kogakuan University. There was also a field trip to the inner and outer shrine which included viewing night time festivals.

The motion picture on the Ise Shrine expressed a serene beauty and esoteric atmosphere. The film induced the impression that the Ise Shrine is somehow special among Shinto Shrines since it houses a god that is said to be central to the Imperial Household. This Japanese understanding as to the role of the shrine, places this religious institution at the center of Japanese folk religiosity.

The shrine name is generic to a number of shrines in the same compound; consisting of the Kotai-Jingu or Naiku (Inner Shrine) and the Toyouke Daijingu or Geku (Outer Shrine), plus more than 120 smaller shrines found on the grounds of two main shrines. The Naiku Shrine is sacred because of the presence of Amaterasu-Omikami. This goddess is considered to be the deity of food, clothing, and dwelling; that is the deity of the elementary necessities of human life.

The Kannamesai, or the Festival of Thanksgiving to Amaterasu, October 15-17 of each year, is the most important festival for the shrine as well as for the Imperial Court. The first grains of rice from the sacred rice field together with Awa and salt collected respectively are offered to Amaterasu. This ritual is conducted by the Saishin, or chief practitioner of the festival and the chief priest (Daigo).

, the vice-chief priest (Shyoguji) together with another 50 supporting priests (Negi). The Saishin is Takatsuka-Kazuko from the Imperial family, who has been practicing for 20 years. In the World War II period, the occupation did not allow former military men to assume this position. There was a custom that required the Saishin to be an unmarried princess, but this requirement was abolished in the 14th century. The Shyoguji also must usually come from the noble class, and under unusual circumstances can also be promoted from the Shyoguji position with the direct consent of the Emperor as was the case with the sudden death of the former Daiguji this past August. The former Daiguji was a samurai and was placed into the position after retiring from a career with the Hitachi Electric Company. Upon his sudden death he was laid to rest in a Buddhist temple. Half of the shrine's practicing priests are also practicing Buddhists in their homes. They seem to be working at the shrine much in the same manner as public servants.

It is commonly said to be a religion of purification. The Kannamesai is a ritual composed of repeated purification ceremonies. Every 20 years the major shrines and the attached buildings are rebuilt.

The Ise Shrine was originally built as a dwelling for the ancestor goddess Amaterasu of the Imperial Household of Yamato, but later on Amaterasu was promoted to the status of king of Heaven (Teno -- thereby also changing gender) and became the central god of the universe. This is the reason why all the prayers said are exclusively for the prosperity of the Imperial Household and for the peace of the nation.

The active mission work of lower level shrines was directed at propagating Shintoism first among lower class Samurai and later among the common people in the Meiji period. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Shinto took on political overtones as the state religion and as the absolute ideology upon which the unity of the nation was established under the Imperial line; said institution being proclaimed as the center of the Japanese Spirit. At this point missionary activity was stopped.

In 1940 over seven million people visited the Shrine. According to Professor Kamata, the Shrine has continued in its special and sacred role in relation to Amaterasu. But seen from the point of view of the faith orientation of the common people, the nature of the Shrine continues to maintain its status as a central religious organization even when accepting with enthusiasm the support of right wing political forces. As long as the Emperor system exists, the Ise Shrine organization will probably remain strong. #

NCCJ MEMBER CHURCH NEWS

Baptist Union: The 28th Assembly of the Baptist Union was held in Kyoto from August 22-24. The new moderator of the Union is Rev. TAKEUCHI Hidekazu of Kyoto Church. The vice-moderators are Rev. OGASAWARA Yoshimichi of Shiogama Church in Sendai, and Ms. IIJIMA Setsuko of Soshin Church in Yokohama. Resolutions adopted at the Assembly included a Peace Appeal, a statement opposing the Prime Minister's Yasukuni Shrine visit, and an appeal for the elimination of Buraku discrimination.

Baptist Convention: The Convention now includes 206 churches among their number. ASAMI Yuzo and Suzuko are appointed as their missionaries to Indonesia. The Women's Association plans a World Prayer Week November 24 to December 1.

Korean Christian Church in Japan: The 38th General Assembly was held in Fukuoka October 22 to 24. The new moderator is Rev. KIM Shin Hwan of Hiroshima Church. The new General Secretary is Rev. LEE Dae Gyong of Funabashi Church outside Tokyo.

Seikokai (Anglican Church): The Japan Seikokai and the Korean Anglican Church will hold a Mission Consultation from November 15 to 19 in Osaka. 23 from Korea and 40 from Japan are expected to participate, under the theme "I have sinned against the Lord--Looking at the History of Anglican Churches in Korea and Japan."

Japanese society is experiencing a number of social disorganization problems which only a few years ago were almost completely unheard of. The situation is of such dynamic proportions as to call into motion the interacting forces of almost all the political and government infrastructures of this country in an attempt to stem the tide and discover answers. The attempts to deal with the rising tide of social problems like holding one's hands over a water fountain in an attempt to stop the water. Yet in spite of all one's efforts, the water continues to seep through one's fingers. The present social disorganization is of such proportions as to challenge the once accepted maxim that Japanese society is almost completely inviolable to pressures toward social disintegration.

To provide a complete analysis of the problem would require the services of a sage, but there are a number of interacting forces that seem to be at work. The first has to do with the violence that appears to increase daily in the lives of students in all levels of education. The pressures on students in the Japanese educational system are so great as to result in a significant increase in the number of grade school, junior high school, and high school students who are afraid of, or retain feelings of uneasiness about attending school. The problem seems to be of a two-tier nature. First, there is the direct fear of violence at the hands of other students. There have been several singular cases that have resulted in direct loss of life through aggressive actions terminating in suicide and/or murder. The second is a fear of the violence of teachers; violence which is not so much of a physical nature but of a systemic education nature which results in an excessive emphasis on intellectual prowess as seen in rote memory and the retention of factual information in order to pass the continuing confluence of entrance examinations. This in itself is a form of violence which results in a loss of the sense of self-worth and esteem.

In all of this a number of attempts have surfaced to deal with the problem, for the viability of the educational system is central to the viability of the nation as it seeks to make a meaningful entry into the 21st century. The problem with all of the attempts is that very few see the dynamics of the situation clearly enough to discover the root causes. In all the educational reform measures, school reform measures, and new teacher certification systems, there is no awareness of the relationship between worshipping at the feet of the gods of high technology and results of the worship in which human personality comes to be seen and understood in technological terms and through technological modes. The human being is reduced thereby to an integer in a vast technological maze, at the cost of obliterating emotive personality.

The point of all of this is simply to indicate that violence and the resulting obliteration of emotive human personality is a direct result of an overemphasis on an educational system that centres in on the worship and practice of the religion of "Technopolis."

One of the most well-meaning but misguided--if not almost demonic--attempts to address this problem is seen in the attempt to rewrite school textbooks so as to increase in students an appreciation for the traditional aspects of Japanese nationalism as expressed in certain modes of Japanese morality and filial piety. The problem here is associated with the confusion that is often retained in the minds of most people when attempts are made to reform textbooks as a means of reforming society. Textbooks have very little to do with the formation of human selfhood. Loving and accepting interaction has almost everything to do with the formation of adequate selfhood and self-respect. What is needed is a fuller understanding of the role of loving nurture in education, a nurture washed clean of technological and nationalistic overtones.